Lafayette Historical Society

P.O. Box 133

Lafayette, CA 94549

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October, 1983

President, Ray Peters

Newsletter Editor:
Nancy Midwood

Monterey Trip November 12 Inside

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Elam Brown travelled to Monterey to become a member of the California Constitutional Convention, which convened on September 1, 1849.

According to Slocum, "...the sessions lasted six weeks, and, notwithstanding an awkward scarcity of books of reference and other necessary aids, much labor was performed, while the debates exhibited a marked degree of ability. In framing the original Constitution of California, slavery was forever prohibited within the jurisdiction of the State; the boundary question between Mexico and the United States was set at rest; provision for the morals and education of the people was made; a Seal of State was adopted, with the motto EUREKA, and many other subjects discussed."

The Constitution was ratified by the people on November 13 (12,064 for, 11 against. Over 1200 ballots were treated as blanks, because of "an informality in printing.) Peter Burnett was elected the first Governor, and Elam Brown became one of the first Assemblymen.

Elam said, "Amid all the various surroundings and positions through life I have never struck or been struck; never run for or from man or boy. I have had but few lawsuits or contentions. I have never bet a cent on a race or cards, and never dealt in stocks. I was never intoxicated by liquor, although I was raised in a tavern; but I have never dealt in the article since. I have never cheated a man, knowingly, out of a dollar; but the reverse has occasionally occurred. I do not intend this as a boast, but as an acknowledgement of the blessing bestowed on me through a long life by my good and benevolent Creator."

How many subsequent lawmakers could do so much (set up an entire government) in so short a period of time (six weeks) and truthfully make such a statement? He further said, " I labor under the same embarrassment that the hunter did who could not shoot a duck; for when he took aim at one, another would put its head in the way."

Ray Peters, President

MONTEREY TRIP

The Lafayette Historical Society's trip to the historic section of Monterey is scheduled for Saturday, November 12, 1983.

Transportation will be provided by car-pooling. Those going that would like to travel with others should meet at the Lafayette BART Station parking lot at 8:30 AM, on the twelfth. Driving time should be about three hours; therefore, you should arrive in Monterey just in time for lunch. You're on your own for lunch.

A walking tour through the historic section is scheduled to begin at 1:30 PM. The tour will be conducted by California Heritage Guides, and will last about one and one-half hours. The tour costs $2.00 per person, plus fifty cents for admission to the buidings. Those taking the tour should be prepared to individually pay the fee.

Each participant should meet with the others at least fifteen minutes before the start of the tour. (1:15 PM) The tour will start at the off of California Heritage Guides, Number 10 Custom House Plaza. That office is behind the Doubletree Inn, near the Pacific House. Parking is available in the vicinity.

Is is suggested that you drive directly to the central area of town, and park near the Old Custom House. You will then be able to eat lunch and take the tour without having to move your car.

There are a great many hotels in the area, so room availability should not be a problem for those that wish to stay the night. Room rates vary from $22 to $400 per night; with many advertised in the lower category. There are also many fine restaurants, moderately priced. California's oldest theater is located downtown, which produces Melodramas from the Gold Coast days. That performance begins at 8:30 PM: tickets cost $4.00 each.

If you would like to go, drop a card to: Lafayette Historical Society, P.O. Box 133, Lafayette, CA 94549. Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number. Indicate whether or not you will be able to provide transportation for others. Tell us if you need a ride. If you want to spend the night, have dinner, and attend the theater, please so indicate. Let us know if you would like us to make reservations for you.

If you are not a member of the Historical Society, please include $5.00 for you first year's dues. Send your card in as soon as possible, or we may not be able to get reservations for you. If you have questions, you may call Ray Peters at 283-5256.

OFFICERS FOR THE 1983-84 YEAR:

President	Ray Peters
Vice President/Membership	Richard Johnson
Corresponding Secretary	Alice Breckling
Recording Secretary	Shirley Thomson
Treasurer	Belinda Quintana

SHADELANDS' HISTORY ROOM

houses the Walnut Creek Historical Society collections, items of local importance such as maps, newspapers, books, photos, oral historics, films and files. Open for research and during tours. Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum is open Wednesday and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m., 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek. Telephone is 935-7871.

BOOK SALES

To date, book sales reported by Joan Merryman total 26 copies of The Improvers of Lafayette and 71 copies of Lafayette, a Pictorial History. LHS benefits when you purchase these books. They are available at Lafayette Book Store for $9.95 and $6.00 respectively.

SCHOOL HISTORY DISPLAY

Joan Merryman, assisted by Alice Breckling, arranged a historical display on Lafayette Schools with materials from the archives. The display, which was written up by the Contra Costa Sun, remained at Conti Camera through September.

ORAL HISTORY

A copy of the song Lafayette, California has been placed in the file, as has a tape recording of Ernia Marriner's talk about his fourteen years as our first city manager.

In Memory of Father Abeloe

The Lafayette Historical Society raised $127.00 at the pot luck dinner raffle for a gift to the San Jose Mission in memory of historian Father Abeloe.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Jack and Darlene Franck of Walnut Creek.

EUGENE O'NEILL HOUSE

The pink stucco house where the playwright lived while waiting for his Danville home to be built in 1939 is located at 5 Juniper Court.

NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR THE ARCHIVES

A handsome certificate of 5 shares in the Lafayette Improvement Club dated May, 1935, issued to Mr. H.W. Johnston, and a letter signed by Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Secretary of State indicating that the club had incorporated on May 27, 1913, have been donated by Mr. Johnston's granddaughter, Mrs. Beatrice Wassersleben of Walnut Creek.

Early 1940s issues of The Lafayette Sun have been donated by The Contra Costa Sun. Photographs of the opening of the theater have been donated by Mrs. Elwood Laws.

REGISTERED LANDMARKS

Jim Craig researched the LHS minutes for a complete record of plaqued and registered landmark sites in Lafayette. The four registered landmarks are Plaza Park, Wayside Inn, Pioneer Store, and Town Hall.

GIFT OF TAPE RECORDER

LHS thanks board member James Craig for the new General Electric tape recorder which was used to tape Ernie Marriner's talk at the annual pot luck supper last spring.

LOCAL HISTORY AT DVC

A local history course, taught by Ruth E. Sutter, meets at Diablo Valley College on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m. in Room 224, Faculty Office Building. "The Gold Rush and After" meets from October 19 - November 23. "Contra Costa County in the 20th Century" meets from November 30 - January 18. Register for either segment by attending the first class.

BOYHOOD DAYS, YGNACIO VILLAGES' REMINISCENCES OF CALIFORNIA IN THE 1850s

edited and with an introduction by Dr. Albert Shumate, is available for $17.42 (includes tax, postage, and handling) from California Historical Society, 2090 Jackson Street, San Francisco, California 94109.

COMPLETE - TEAR OFF - MAIL WITH DUES

NAME _____
First Last Spouse

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ DATE _____

Classification: (Circle one)	Student	Family	Business	Life
	$2.50	$5.00	$50.00	$100

SPECIAL INTERESTS: PLEASE CHECK IF YOU CAN HELP

____ Historic Preservation
____ Landmarks
____ Community Observer
____ Oral History
____ Typing
____ Other (describe)

_____
_____
_____
_____

____ Field Trips
____ Photographs
____ Research
____ Newspaper Clippings
____ Phoning

Name, Address & Phone Number of friends interested in joining:

_____

_____

_____

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Comments:

Mail to: LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, California, 94549

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First Class Mail